TOUCHING The LITURGY,

OR

Common-prayer Book

CERTAIN QUERIES AND OBJECTIONS *ANSWERED.*

TOGETHER WITH A LETTER To a Non-Conformist.

By a Friend to the Church of ENGLAND.

Heb. 13. 7.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation.

OXFORD,

Printed for SAMUEL POCOCK.
Anno Dom. M DC LXI.

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Inconveniencies

1. From Scandal abroad: For reading a little will be a countenancing of the whole, and it will be reported, wee use it, and not considered, what part of it wee use.
2. At home; Which will be
   1. To the Good, who will be likely to be drawn into sad separations, upon this account.
   2. To the Bad, who though they will like the thing, yet will extremely dislike us, censuring us as those that complie against Conscience, for worldly ends.

   This Scandal will be, 1. of Sin, 2. of Sorrow: And this Scandal most highly aggravated, because there is now no necessity of using it, the Command being taken off, and Christs command being against offending our brethren in the unnecessary use of things indifferent.
3. Hereby wee shall endanger the ruine of our brethren that cannot comply at all.
4. Hereby wee endanger the bringing of it to be imposed.
5. Hereby wee shall be likely to hinder the reformation of it.
6. Hereby wee shall lose the paines and praiers of our brethren who have striven much to procure this indulgence for us.
7. When wee have incurred the Scandal of so many, by reading what wee can, wee may be turned out

out at last: For either it will be reformed, or not; if yea, then it will be well enough to read it when it is; if not, then reading what wee can will pull on us extreme inconveniencies, and yet will not serve turn at last.

8. Wee shall goe against the Example of our Eminentest brethren at London.

9. Wee shall incurre the censure of changeablenesse, when wee shall begin with this, and afterwards use the new Forme.

Obj. Hereupon wee shall be censured as obstinate.

Ans. 1. This censure will not be of so dangerous consequence as the offense of the generality of the Godly.

2. Wee have a ready reply; Wee are not obstinate, because wee have Liberty granted us, and no command layd upon us.

3. The same men will farre worse censure us, if wee read it, as complying against our own Principles.

4. Wee are not satisfied, tis Lawfull, as things now stand; Wee shall confirme the people in their Idolatrizing; Wee shall make so many yeares stirre for Reformation to be to no purpose.

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TOUCHING The LITURGY,

OR

COMMON-PRAYER BOOK,

I. Queries Answer'd.
II. Objections Answer'd.
III. A Letter to a Non-Conformist.

Quer. 1. *WHether the constant use of the Liturgy can consist with the precept of growing in Grace? Is it not to stand at a Stay?*

Ans. By using the Liturgy, as we ought (with intention) we come to use it with more understanding and devotion. And this surely is to grow in Grace. The Grace and Excellency of Prayer (and that which is acceptable to God) consisteth not in the effusion of Words or varying of phrases, but in the Humility and Devotion of the Heart. We may stand at a stay, in respect of usuall ordinary formes of Prayer, and yet goe forward upon occasion, enlarge and adde new formes as there shall be cause: So the Church doth: And Ministers may adde as present necessity requires.

2. Qu. *Whether the use of the Liturgy be more edifying then Preaching and Praying powerfully by the Spirit? And shall the Spirit be limited and stinted?*

Ans. The use of the Liturgy (as it is commanded) doth nor exclude powerfull Preaching, nor the Ministers praying before and after Sermon and interpose in Sermon, if he please, with Sobriety and discretion. The Ministers Spirit may be limited and stinted and directed by the Spirit of the Church, as the Spirit of the Congregation by the Ministers Spirit. The Liturgy, were it not so disfamed and disparaged, would be found far more for edification and comfort, then it is now among some People; the fault being not in the Liturgy, but in their indevotion and disaffection. The Spirit helpeth us to pray with that humility and devotion which the Liturgy calls for: And this is a greater gift of the Spirit, then to help us to words: Yet it is the Spirit also, that hath helped us to those words.

3. Qu. *Whether the Episcopal or Presbyt. way be found by experience more effectual for gaining of Souls?*

Anſ. We are partial to our ſelves. God knows what miſchief is done and what hindrance to ſouls by diviſion and contention: And they that are guilty of the diviſion are the greateſt obſtructers of the way of ſalvation: (They that are puffe up with pride and ſelfe conceit and contempt of others, and are froward againſt Superiours are in as bad a caſe as ſwearers and drunkards:) Let Preſbyterial joyne with the Epiſcopal in conformity to good Lawes, and the Epiſcop. with the Preſbyt. in fervent preaching; and let all give good Example: And then Gods work will proſper in their hands. Conformity ſure is no hindrance to exemplary holineſs and diligence in the Miniſter of Chriſt Jeſus: Whoſe love ſhould prevaile with us all, to be more meek and lowly.

4. Qu *Whether one may not ſerve God as well without the Common Prayer Book, as with it?*

Anſ. No. For you are enjoyned to uſe it, and your diſobedience in not uſing it as you ought, is a diſſervice to God and his Church. If you were left to your liberty, you could not, without immodeſty at leaſt, prefer your own inventions before the ſolemn Prayers approved and uſed by your Superiours, and commended to you though not enjoyned. Philautie, and ſelfe liking is commonly the root of Schiſm, And ſeparation: A little ſelfe denyal would heal our breaches and make us all at one. And the Union and Uniform practice of Miniſters would be of great effect to the proficiency and growth of the people.

XXXIX. *Objections or Exceptions againſt the Liturgy briefly Anſwered.*

Obj. 1. *THe Liturgy hath been very much defamed and ſpoken againſt.*

Anſ. It hath not deſerved that fate, it ſelfe, but we have deſerved that God ſhould permit this for our coldneſs in the uſe of it.

Obj. 2. *There be divers inconveniences in it, for which it ought to be removed.*

Anſ. There be greater and more conveniences and benefits of it, for which it ought to be preſerved and continued: Thereby (as *Calvin* obſerv'd) proviſion is made for the unskilfulneſs of ſome, the extravagant levity of others is prevented, the conſent of the Churches among themſelves appeareth.

Obj. 3. *Forms ought not to be ſet and preſcribed.*

Anſ. God preſcribed a form of bleſſing the people. *Numb.* 6. 23. Chriſt preſcribed a Form of Prayer to his Diſciples. *Luk.* 11. 2. And the benefit of ſet formes is chiefly to be an hedge to the true religion, and to keep out all mixtures and corruptions.

Obj. 4. *Outward bodily worſhip ought not to be enjoyned as it is in the lithurgy, for God muſt be worſhiped in Spirit.*

Anſ. We muſt glorify God in our bodies as well as our ſoules, 1 *Cor.* 6. in which we have the example of Chriſt, who proſtrated himſelf, *Matt.* 28. And of *Paul*, who kneeled down and prayed *Act.* 20. And this humble geſture is moſt agreable to that moſt lowly duty.

Obj. 5. *It is not fit the people ſhould bear a part in the publick ſervice as they doe in the liturgy.*

Anſ.

Anſ. It is good to quicken their devotion and to fix their Attention, and even in S. *Pauls* time it was (it ſeemes) the faſhion to anſwer Amen. 1 *Cor.* 14. 16.

Obj. 6. *In the letany you pray for Gods mercy on all men.*

Anſ. And very juſtly, for S. *Paul* ſaith, God would have all men to be ſaved 1 *Tim.* 2.

Obj. 7. *Prayer ſhould not be devided in little portions.*

Anſ. A long continued prayer is tedious, when the dividing it into ſeveral Collects and portions helps us to be more earneſt and fervent; by recollection of our ſelves at the little ſpaces between. Thus the Antients.

Obj. 8. *Sitting at receiving the Sacrament is more convenient then kneeling.*

Anſ. The geſture of ſuppliants and petitioners well becomes us at receiving ſo great a bleſſing; and prayer is joyned with the act of receiving: Kneeling is the prayer-geſture.

Obj. 9. *The pronouncing of Abſolution is an overbold preſumtion.*

Anſ. It is a power Chriſt hath ſolemnly eſtated on the Prieſt, and it is much for the comfort of all that are truly penitent.

Obj. 10. *The hymnes of the Church, as the* Te Deum, *are not fit.*

Anſ. S. Auſtin *Confeſſ.* 9. Sth, the hymnes of the Church fetcht many tears from him. And certainly to any man that hath an humble faithful heart to go along with it, the *Te Deum* is as Chriſtian a piece of praiſe and prayer as can be: The like may be ſaid of *Gloria in excelſis* &c.

Obj. 11. *The Doxology at the end of every Pſalm might be omitted.*

Anſ. Glory be to the Father &c. is an antient piece and of great conſideration, to ſecure and defend the Catholike Doctrine of the Trinity, againſt all antient or modern Arians.

Obj. 12. *The Lords prayer, and prayers for the King are too often repeated.*

Anſ. There are ſeveral parts of the ſervice, and the Church hath ſuch reverence for Chriſt and the King, that in every part the Lords Prayer ſhould be uſed, and the King prayed for: beſides, the ſame prayer may be repeated again with more zeal and attention.

Obj. 13. *The praying after every Commandment is not convenient.*

Anſ. It is very convenient, the people ſhould hear the Commandements with humble affection and geſture, and try themſelves and implore Gods mercy for former breaches, and beg his grace and help for the time to come.

Obj. 14. *The offertory or collection at the Sacrament is a hindrance.*

Anſ. It is a part of the ſervice, much valued by the antients, as an acceptable ſacrifice, well pleaſing unto God.

Obj. 15. *There is no need of private baptiſme.*

Anſ. If the child be in danger, the deſires of parents muſt be ſatisfied, and the child not deprived of his right.

Obj. 16. *The font is ill placed near the Church porch.*

Anſ. Very fitly, to ſignify the Sacrament there celebrated to be a rite of imitation of entrance into the Church: As the Chancel is aſſigned for the other Sacrament, belonging to the more perfect.

Obj. 17. *The Church Catechiſme is very deficient and too ſhort.*

Anſ. The Church hath ſhewed much Chriſtian prudence in ſetting down for all to learn, only thoſe few things which are neceſſary to the meaneſt for the directi-

on of Christian faith and practice.

Obj. 18. *Confirmation by the Bishop is not requisite for the baptized.*

Ans. It is very requisite that every such Child at years of understanding should singly and solemly before God, the B P and the congregation, with his own mouth and his own consent take upon himself the obligation of the Baptismal vow. And the prayer and blessing is to very good purpose.

Obj. 19. *Prayers at the burial of the dead are not of any use.*

Ans. We do not pray to, or for them: But to God, and for our selves. And such prayers and lessons as are then used must needs be very useful for the living and seasonable, when their hearts are softned with mourning.

Obj. 20. *Thanksgiving after childbirth is like the Jewish purification.*

Ans. Any rite of the Jewes, not typical of Christ to come, but decent and useful, may be now prescribed in the Christian Church. And such is this custom of thanksgiving.

Obj. 21. *Communion of the sick is not needful.*

Ans. This *Viaticum* (as the Fathers call it) ought not to be denyed any hungring and thirsting Traveller at the time when it may yield him most comfort, and our charity most inclines us to allow it him But yet, we warn all to receive the Communion frequently in the Church, that they may not be troubled for want of it on the bed of sickness.

Obj. 22. *The service of the Commination, or Cursings on Ashwensday is not good.*

Ans. The *Amen* of acknowledgement (not of prayer) is designed to bring men to humiliation, the special duty of the Day.

Obj. 23. *The observation of lent is Popish.*

Ans. The lenten fast was antiently observed (as S. *Jerom* saith *Epist.* 54.) according to the tradition of the Apostles, and is a good præparation for the communion at Easter.

Obj. 24. *However, the lithurgy of the Church of England hath proved an offense.*

Ans. Many indeed have been displeased or angry at it, but the thing being not evil in it selfe, their anger is causeless and therefore sinful.

Obj. 25. *It is a great burthen to Ministers to read all the prayers of the lit.*

Ans. It is very prudently framed with as much variety and as moderat length of each part, as could be imagined, for the ease of Ministers and people, nor can it be burthensome but to those that think devotion it selfe a burthen.

Obj. 26. *There are many unprofitable burthensome Ceremonies commanded.*

Ans. They are not many, *kneeling* and *standing:* Nor unprofitable; *kneeling*, to increase and shew our humility, *standing* to elevate and joyn the body with the soul in confession of God and thanksgiving.

Obj. 27. *Ministers consciences have been disquieted, who could not yeild to the ceremonies and rites enjoyned them.*

Ans. Ministers at their ordination voluntarily subscribe to them, and if afterward they meet with scruples, they should seek Information and meekly receive it from their Superiour.

Obj. 28. *Godly people have been deprived of the ordinances of God by this means, and kept from the Lords table.*

Ans. The obstinate and refractory are justly punished according to the Law, and they that refuse to kneel deprive themselves of the Sacrament, by not doing their duty.

Qu. 29.

Obj. 29. *Forrein Churches have diſliked our liturgy.*

Anſ. Some particular men have expreſt their diſlike, to whom we can oppoſe the judgement of others approving it.

Obj. 30. *But ſome things ſure may be amended.*

Anſ. It is not therefore to be aboliſhed, but reformed, and that muſt be done by our ſuperiours in an orderly way, and private men muſt acquieſce, and ſubmit, and in the mean interpret all things to be beſt.

Obj. 31. *Divers faithful Miniſters have been deprived of their livings for not conforming to the liturgy.*

Anſ. The Non-conformiſts were puniſht for diſobedience to the lawes: And perhaps ſome choſe Non-conformity, as the more inſtrumental for their miniſtry in houſes, and for their gain. But, the number of thoſe that were lately depriv'd for conformity is far greater.

Obj. 32. *The liturgy haih been raiſed to too high an eſteem, and idolized.*

Anſ. Give the liturgy its due, not its uſurped eſtimation and we are agreed. If ſome idolized and over valued Preaching, it muſt, not be aboliſhed.

Obj. 33. *You think there is no other way of Gods worſhip.*

Anſ. This is the publick way of worſhip only allowed among us: And in other countries we oppoſe not them in their way.

Obj. 34. *The liturgy hath juſled out the preaching of Gods word.*

Anſ. It requires the preaching of the word, aſſignes the place where the Sermon ſhall come in, hath prayers for a bleſſing upon it. Prayers and preaching do very well agree; and the better we diſcharge the duty of prayer, the more ſhall we profit by Sermons. Therefore let not Sermons juſtle out common prayers neither.

Obj. 35. *The people pleaſe themſelves in their lip-labour, careleſs of true piety.*

Anſ. How know you that? Be not uncharitable; One may pleaſe himſelf with a bear preſence at Sermon. Neither Sermon nor Prayers are to bear the fault of indevout and careleſs people.

Obj. 36. *Your Book is a compliance with the Papiſts in their ſervice.*

Anſ. Our reformers retained, both in liturgy and Doctrin nothing but what the Papiſts had received from purer antiquity, and complied with the antient Church.

Obj. 37. *But Papiſts are confirmed in their ſuperſtitions by this means.*

Anſ. This is a means to win them, by retaining what they have from Antiquity.

Obj. 38. *The liturgy is a means to make an idle Miniſtry, & hinders the gift of prayer.*

Anſ. There be other wayes of labour, beſides extempore prayer: Preaching, Catechiſing *&c.* He which hath a mind to be idle, may be idle with the Directory. The gift of prayer may be exerciſed in private, and in publick, as occaſion ſhall require.

Obj. 39. *The liturgy will be matter of endleſs Contention, unleſs it be taken away.*

Anſ. The taking it away will offend more. The contention about it will ceaſe when the oppoſers of it are more modeſt and humble.

A Letter to a Non-conformiſt.

Sir.

THe Queſtion between us is, whether you ought to conform and read the common prayer-book, as the rubrick directs, or no? Arguments and Reaſons for Conformity, I offer you Theſe.

1. You are ordained by a BP. according to the form of the Church of England It is an Apoſtacy from your order, not to conform to the liturgy; not to obey the lawful order and appointment of the Biſhop. And you know the BP. requireth conformity.

2. The Law of the Q. *Elizabeth* requireth, under a penalty, that both Miniſters and people conform unto the liturgy, and this was never aboliſhed, but is ſtill obligatory.

3. You ſay, the prayers are not only lawful, but very good: They are very good and they are commanded: And will you juſtle them out by your own prayers, which are doubted, whether they be good, or no?

4. You may have time after the liturgy for a prayer of your own framing, both before and after Sermon, ſo that you do not tediouſly and unceſſarily enlarge; and will you not give the Churches Prayers their due place and time?

5. You need not fear, the uſe of them will ſpoile your gift, or make you idle: For there are no harder ſtudents, none more gifted men and better qualifyed, then many that love and uſe the liturgy: Nor doth the liturgy deſerve the blame of any mans idleneſs, if he be idle.

6. If you ſhould call the liturgy cold and heartleſs formes, you would be guilty of a ſlander againſt the Church; for they are not ſo: The formes are right and pathetical: Let us bring ſuitable affections. Indevout people will be cold and heartleſs at theſe and all other prayers alſo. By preaching they are to be ſtirred up and taught to pray.

7. If the gift of ſome excellent men be more effectual for the ſtirring up of devotion in the people, the boldneſs and miſcarriage of ſome other, in their own prayers, expoſes the religion to contempt and ſcorn. Which conſideration doth forbid a licence of praying to be permitted to all.

8. It becomes an humble ſpirit to ſubmit to the judgement and order of the Church and not to break the bond of peace and unity, not to hinder the uniformity of Divine ſervice upon any private Conceits of doing better then your betters.

9. You may improve your gift in private as much as you pleaſe, and uſe it when the publick formes will not ſerve the turn.

10. Laſtly, we have ſeen by experience what ill effects have followed upon the diſuſe and contempt of the liturgy.

Conſider ſeriouſly of theſe things, and let not the reſpect of any perſon or party, nor your own prejudice or former practice, nor a humor of oppoſitions, prevaile more with you then the Authority and Reaſon of that Church, whoſe ſon and miniſter you profeſs to be.

Aug. 21. 1661.

Poſtſcript.

IT is alſo to be conſiered, that at the end of the preface to the common prayer book, we read; *All Prieſts and Deacons ſhall be bound to ſay daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, except they be let by preaching, ſtudying of Divinity, or ſome other urgent cauſe.* And ſurely the Revenue of the Church ſettled upon us by Law, is for the office we perform according to the Law: Nor can it be comfortably enjoyed (as I conceive) by any that violate the legal duty.

FINIS.